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HOW 4-H CLUBS DEVELOP LEADERSHIP ABILITIES OF RURAL YOUNG PEOPLE

A radio talk by Mrs. Mary B. Nelson, Extension Agent, Boys' and Girls' Club Work, Lincoln, Nebraska, delivered in the National 4-H club radio program, December 5, 1936.

In this great country of ours, there is a wonderful natural setting for the rural home and the rural community. Yet this community, to be an ideal one, needs good leadership. I and many of you, have seen this leadership develop as a result of 4-H club work done in the past twenty-some years. A good knowledge of best agricultural and home practices, contacts with others, and confidence gained through various club activities are leadership builders. At a recent county achievement program, a count was taken and 78 percent of the leaders present were former 4-H members. This tells us that club members are willing to do for others as has been done for them.

From the time individuals are members or possibly officers in their own club, they are receiving training that makes toward able leadership. The ability to handle a group or act personally in a business-like manner is a most desirable quality for good leadership. Training the ability to decide what to do and what not to do begins right here, also; then comes the learning to do things completely and by correct methods.

The goals of 4-H club work affords excellent opportunities to teach the art of living which is certainly one of the prerequisites of a good leader. The development of Head, Heart, Hand and Health will lead to a happier, more useful life.

Judging work teaches systematic thinking which makes it easier for them to recognize standards in every-day living.

Demonstration is another real promoter of thought. The 4-H demonstrator is doing or making something and at the same time telling exactly how each step is performed and why it is done in that way. A member of a canning club from western Nebraska, aside from canning 6,219 1/4 quarts, gave over 334 individual demonstrations. These were given in her own county and on approved methods of handling fruits, vegetables and meats. This leadership was a real service to her community.

4-H work encourages co-operation and the members working for the good of the club, rather than just themselves. If the club members learn to "Win without bragging and lose without squealing" which is the 4-H slogan, they are surely getting training in sportsmanship.

The "Hand H" receives a deserving attention in club work. Leaders are going farther than teaching the money making and money saving practices which may be a basis of the project. It is important to earn a living and conserve the income but the "hand" can do more. Girls can make the home comfortable and attractive. Boys can earn their share in making the home comfortable and beautifying the farmstead. The ability to keep records and the good habit of finishing a thing which is started, will have no small part in the success of these young people later on.

The health phase of living has been strengthened by stress on proper nutrition and sanitary surroundings, as called to attention in various projects and many state-wide programs. It is important to have a healthy body for a happy, useful life.

A girl who became a state health champion this year has improved her health greatly in the past three years. She has improved conditions which were found as a result of health examinations given in her county each year.

As we read and think of the lives of those who have served in any field, they have made the lives of men and women happier and the world a little better for having lived in it. That is exactly what our 4-H leaders all over the nation are doing today and it is fine to see 4-H members working into this leadership. As has been said, "Life's greatest happiness comes through service to others."

It has been a rare privilege to associate with 1200 club members from over 40 states this past week at the National 4-H Club Congress. When watching them in judging and other contests, it appears evident that they have had a background of training in various ways which has made resourcefulness that will be most useful to them in years to come.

